A WIND UPON THE HEATH

NORA J. MURRAY

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Phil. Hogarth

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A WIND UPON THE HEATH

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BY NORA J. MURRAY

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A WIND UPON THE HEATH

A wind upon the heath at close of day,
Swaying the whin and thistle east and west,
Rippling the waters brown upon its way,
Laving the moorland's breast.

Shaking the night dews on each tuft and blade,
Sweeping in circles round the fairy thorn,
With midnight sleeping on the hillside glade,
And far away the morn.

Along the grasses, swiftly flying fast,
It lights the little torches of the broom
Like golden sprays from out the heavens cast,
To sparkle in the gloom.

A wind upon the heath, and yet I fear
The terrors of its drifting history,
A story woven with a smile and tear
In solemn mystery.

While louder in the sacredness of night,
A thousand clanging cymbals join its swell,
It brings wild thoughts of kneeling shadows white
Around a holy well.

Full deeper grows the agony of sound,
The phantom army of the dead is nigh,
And bloodwet lips are trembling on the ground,
A dead coach passes by.

Within the gale a spirit's eerie sigh
Is brooding on the browning bogland's waste,
A death sweat woven with a banshee's cry
That seems to echo "haste."

The tremor of a woman's sobbing soul,
The swooning caoine of Emer's lonely wail,
Or Dérdre's songs that down the hillside roll
To haunt the midnight gale.

But softer in the waning of the night,
A lisping voice seems calling in the moss,
It brings a vision of an Infant's flight,
Golgotha and a Cross,

Of Easter lilies, robed in yellow green,
Of flower choristers in stately grace,
Sweet alleluias to ring unseen
Around the lonely place.

Now sleeps the wind beneath the saffron skies,
A blessed sadness wreathes the spring-time day,
Beneath the feet of dawn a triumph lies
Of silky blossoms gay.

And I will weave a garland dewy white,
A chaplet of wild scents so freshly fair,
To place upon the heath wind in the night,
For God is surely there.

AWAY

Grey geese, grey geese, flying to the sea,
Branches in the moonshine, silver on a tree,
Spangle in the wild wave flashing on the foam,
Shadows on a brown sail gliding back to home.

Wild birds, wild birds, soaring on the deep,
Wilderness of waters moaning in its sleep,
Flowers in the white spray drifting in between,
Blossoms on a snow-crest whirling in the green.

Come wind, come rain, brooding on the bay,
Morning on a hillside, far, O far away,
Poppies in a corn land, sunbeams on its breast,
Blessings on the wild wings folded now in rest.

A SYMPHONY IN WHITE

Chill were the strands
Of crystal stars upon the sombre lands,
Brown branches held a diamond cluster bright,
Shimmering in the gladness of the sight ;
From tree to tree a train
Of silver in its silent reign.

Death was its song
Upon the river's heart, where seasons long
A swan was happy by the pillar reeds.
But came the ice-flake and its crystal beads,
The proud white neck lay cold
One morn upon the frozen fold.

THE DEAD POETS

(Easter 1916)

They sang fair songs in starlight and the dusk,
When shadows wove a sadness in their dreams,
And drowsy wood-winds wafted twilight musk
To perfume thoughts enshrined in amber beams.

But with the vision came the Mother Heart,
Proud Freedom's golden halo flashing bright,
"My sons, I need thee, come with me apart,
And hear the haunting story of my night."

They learned the story of her smiles and tears,
Her plaintive call aroused the mystic fire,
Henceforth the sword to right the wrong of years,
And sound the battle chord upon the lyre.

They saw the Land of Youth beyond the mist,
Where angel hearts awaited them above,
So in the greying morn their pure lips kissed,
And died upon a Mother's breast for love.

KNOCKNAREA

In harvest light,
Crowned with eternal symbols of the wild,
Its noble head in silent majesty
Smiles down upon the fruiting valleys mild,
Where wind and golden grain make minstrelsy,
Beyond a silver vision of Lough Gill
Peeps through its wooded banks, a ghostly sail
Reflected in the blue seems strangely still,

While Yeat's mountain stored with twilight dreams
And memories of Diarimuid and Finn,
In chilly grandeur gives immortal themes
To souls who seek a spirit world within.
Along the beach the crested ocean's song,
Enwoven with the seabirds' symphony,
Breaks o'er the hazel glen and soft along
The mountain flowers in soothing harmony.
Beneath the stony cairn its echoes sleep,
While sunset lights are playing on the wave,
What time the magic ones strange vigil keep
With Connacht's shadow queen, the mystic Maev.

IN SUMMER

O Heart of my Heart! come and rest in the woodlands,
Away from the darkness of sorrow and tears,
Come, whisper your grief to the breeze on the moorlands,
Forget the cruel past with its folly and fears.
Avourneen machree, sure the birdeens are singing
A hush-song of joy for thy sad, weary heart,
And the blossoming bluebell a welcome is ringing,
Come, listen asthore, ere its sweetness depart.

Together we'll rest where the flowers of springtime
In fair rainbow tints deck the dew-laden green,
And soothing sweet breath of the soft-swaying green pine
Will chase away memories so bitter and keen.
O, come to the woodlands! no shadow or sorrow
Can hover around in that arbour of love,
Let hope come to thee with the dawn of the morrow,
And with it a blessing of peace from above.

ALL IN A DAY

In russet glory of the autumn eves
And lingering lights of gold upon the sere,
A brooding peace soft o'er the valley weaves
A mystic spell of sorrowed joy and fear,
The children wreathing chestnut shells of brown
And seeking beechnuts where the dead leaves lie,
Soon change their happy smiles when old men frown
And tell the story how the brave ones die.

The amber rays of moonbeam on the thatch,
With chastening light reveal the whitened wall,
The rutted boreen leading to the latch,
Where whirling leaves around the doorstep fall,
A butterfly lies dying on the pane,
But over where the kneeling figures sob
An aged mother's heart is rent in twain,
Her dying sigh is wafted to her God.

The opal dawn is stealing through the vale,
Where Death stands gloating 'mid a harvest rare
Of youthful faces, bloodstained, cold and pale,
A battle's priceless prize for Death too fair,
Across the field there breathes a gentle sigh,
A soldier's soul is moaning in its flight,
Uuknown a mother's spirit hovers nigh
To bear her kindred heart beyond the night.

ERIN

Kind home of hallowed memories dear,
O Erin mine!
Of shadowed joy and secret tear,
O Erin mine!
Your lonely bog and wind-kissed hill
Blue mountain stream and curling rill
Grow ever, ever dearer still,
O Erin mine!

Thy fern-crowned knolls and fairy courts,
O Erin mine!
Soft whispering wind round eerie forts,
O Erin mine!
Are all mine own, oh, sweet delight
To love a land whose dawn is bright
With hopes that steal the morning light,
O Erin mine!

WILL-O'-THE-WISPS

Out in the boglands of brown
In a maze of silver white,
Over the bawn and the clover fields
In a whirling wild delight,
A woman latches the door,
And signs the cross on her brow,
For, Glory to God, the lights are near,
And the fairies passing now.

Maybe 'tis joy they'll bring
On the wild sea road, machree,
Where Brian Og's wife with the fever lies,
And her little children three;

But God between us and harm,
She kneels with her Rosary,
Praying aloud to the Mother of One
To spare the mother of three.

O dancing lights of the bog,
A sorrow you oftimes bring,
To simple hearts on the mountain side
When the moonshine shadows cling.
Still, little Will-o'-the-Wisp,
Could I grasp you in my hand,
Would you lead me over the mountain heath
To the heart of fairy land?

Down by the hill o' the sidhe
To the sound of piping reeds,
Where Angus plays on his silver harp
In the shade of sleeping weeds.
Over the meadow and bawn,
With starlight soft on the sod,
Like a lantern bright would you lead the way
To the Tir-na-nOg of God!

IN A CITY CHURCH

She bent before the Holy Place,
A shawl hid half her wrinkled face,
A silent throng went to and fro,
She heeded not but told her woe
Within the dusk in murmurs low.

The dying Christ upon the wood
She knelt beneath. O Jesu, could
I pray and love so unaware!
She stood and touched the bleeding Hair,
And Feet, and left three flowers there.

THE BOREEN

There is a rugged grey boreen,
It steals its lonely way
Between the gorse bells full of gold that shine the night
and day.
The cowslips wave shy, dimpled heads
Along the sun-kissed green,
Where fairies lurk in moonlight mists, and weave love
charms unseen.

And down below a big whin bush
In spreading regal state
Is guarding where the Mass path leads unto the chapel gate.
A sacred hush is over all,
But with the morning dew
The skylark like a cherub sings when soaring in the blue.

The heart of me goes thinkin' long,
I feel that side by side
The dead ones wander here in joy when comes the
eventide.
The twilight smiles on ev'ry leaf,
And whiter grows the grey,
For heaven's path my boreen is when fades the toilsome day.

THE CHOICE

In Autumn time,
When faint the rainbow light
Enshrined the harvest night,
I saw her walk beneath the orchard boughs,
And meekly listen to her dreamer's vows,
Full gladsome was the tune within her heart,
For life and love had proffered her a part
That Autumn time.

In Autumn time,
The gilded amber beams
Awoke to heaven's dreams,
From hush of death, the fading leaf, the rot,
To graceful thoughts of things that faded not,
I saw her walk again through falling leaves,
A blackveil'd nun in silent heartfelt ease
This Autumn time.

WAITING

Below the tide is rolling in,
The boats are safe ashore,
The gulls are screaming on the cliff,
But where are you, asthore.

I pass by Cloonagh's lonely strand,
My heart with tears unshed,
O howling waves, go back, go back,
And find that dear dark head.

My fireside is silent now,
The fishing nets are dry,
The boat upturned upon the beach,
And all alone am I.

O when I cut the brown seaweed
Upon the foamy track,
Beneath the wave I seem to see
A white face in the wrack.

I'll drive the cow across the heath,
And hasp the cabin door,
Before the Altar I will pray,
And kneel upon the floor,

With arms outstretch'd to Mary's Son,
I'll sob my Litany,
To search the waves below the bar,
And give my dead to me.

BEYOND

Between the hills,
The long grey path steals onward to the light,
Where stardust glinting makes the dusky night
A spirit world of faces cold and white.

Upon the hills,
When pearly pink the cloudlets shade the blue,
And silver echoes sleep in forest dew,
A soul is watching by a scented yew.

Beyond the hills,
A wild bird sings returning to its nest,
And trails its wing upon the billow's breast,
Beyond, O Death, where shadows hide the west.

A RHYME OF THE ROAD.

From Donegal's hills to the plains of Kildare,
There is many a cross road to pass,
Six days of the week roamin' round without care,
And a Sunday for restin' and Mass.
I tramp ev'ry road from the hill to the turn,
Crooked boreens I never despise,
The house in the lane always has a good churn,
And the van'thee is kindly besides.

"Good day and good luck," as I enter the door,
Soon the stool be the fire is mine,
The baby is creepin' below on the floor,
Sure the grandest wee child of the nine.
The wind may be cold blowin' up from the coast,
But the fire is blazin' in glee,
I tell of the banshee and two-headed ghost
That followed me up from the sea.

Then onward I tramp on my long lonely way,
As the hill shadows race down the glen,
The smell of the bogmint comes over the brae,
And the laugh of the turf-cuttin' men.
'Tis often the schoolboys would help me along,
For they pity "old white curly Dan,"
Alongside a ditch when I sing them a song,
Sure they cheer for the old beggarman.

The laughter of children brings sobs to my heart,
It reminds me of days that have sped,
When Kate and meself travell'd round in the cart,
And wee Tommy, now twenty years dead.
Alone on my journeys I have a good cry,
When I think of them both in the clay,
While "white curly Dan" only longin' to die,
Is still roamin' the old weary way.

A NOCTURNE

Above the village smiles a silver star,
Forerunner of the night,
While shadows shroud the mountain peaks afar,
And flames are leaping bright
Upon the hearth, where burning pine boughs scent
The deeper dusk of eve.
Within the boreen fairies pitch their tent,
What time the poets weave
Sweet dreams that wake within the hush of God
When ev'ry branch is still.
The copper leaves lie sodden on the sod
Beside the haunted mill.
Across the sky the night's soft garments trail
Above the empty nests,
Where summer birds saw summer cloudlets sail
Beyond the mountain crests.

Now night is here and not a wind to wave
The last of June's delight,
Save gliding spirits from the hillside cave
The wanderers of night.
But in the west a bank of shadows glows,
A curtain golden bright
With rainbow hues in soft celestial rows,
A phantasy of light.
An oak tree's branches fling a darksome shield
Athwart the blended waves,
Swift straying gleams within the churchyard field
Are silver on the graves.
And over all there steals a glory soft,
God's silhouette and sign,
The village chapel with its cross aloft
To crown the scene divine.

THE DANCING CHILD

Little child of the rosebud feet,
Light as a wind on summer wheat,
Or bronzing rays on the hawthorn sweet ;

Tripping soft on the gilded green,
Dancing light as an elfin queen,
A primrose sleeps on the green unseen.

Hear, little heart, the cuckoo's bell
Ringing over the rowan dell,
Soon, very soon, will it be farewell ;

So, girleen, dance though clouds may pall,
The sunshine laughs when showers fall
On briar leaves by a crumbling wall,
With pink buds twining the branches tall.

TO THE SEA

Open thy sealed heart, O sea of gray,
Tell us thy secrets in song,
While the dancing foam of a sunlit day,
A diamond veil o'er the sparkling way,
Steals thy billow swiftly along.

Be it of nymphs that revel below,
Where pearl and coral entwine,
Fair home of the Tritons whose hearts aglow
Hush to the music, languidly slow,
Of winds breathing kisses divine.

Sing it of seagulls beside the spray,
Gliding on crests to the strand,
Where the wavelet clings to the stolen ray,
Melting its light in the silver bay
As it greets the star-blossomed land.

O, tell it not of the hearts of rest,
In the caves where the sea-gods sleep,
Of the surge-kissed bones of the young and best,
Those fair ones gone from the old home nest,
Eternity found in the deep.

Breathe us a song of shimmering waves
Bathed in moonlight above,
When the cliff birds fly to their festooned caves,
And hearts are asleep, but He Who saves
Ever watching in wistful love.

ONLY A WAIF

Within the gloom where tall red piles forbid
The very sun to smile, she crouched amid
An archway's canopy,
A fragile form beneath a ragged shawl,
A wistful pleading in her eyes was all
Evoked a sympathy.

With eventide she saw the flickering flame,
That guttered in the grimy window pane,
Within that reeking street,
Soon ghostly shadows fell and raced apart,
And faster beat her cheerless little heart,
When fell the blinding sleet.

So cold and friendless, wild with haunting fears,
She sought for brightness through her rushing tears,
While ever and anon
A backward glance for one upon her trail,
A rush through traffic then—a weird wail,
Her little race was run.

"An accident," and many stood to peer,
The blood was mingling with an oozing tear
Upon the sightless eyes,
And scented beings in furs fled from the scene,
Perhaps wond'ring why a gutter child so mean
Was even worth a sigh.

But up from earth an angel's trumpet song,
Another soul to join the happy throng
Before the Throne above.
"O suffer little ones to come to Me,
Within My Heart a home shall ever be
For such—Eternal Love."

IN DEREEN

Away in the mountain a cottage of white,
A pathway just leadin' you in,
A field where the fairies make merry at night,
Green hedges clipped pretty and trim ;
An archway of woodbine just over the door,
And ivy that trails round the latch,
A dream-world of roses, and every day more
Creepin' round by the sides of the thatch.

A sweet cosy kitchen just askin' you in,
The tins seem to dance on the wall,
The delph on the dresser flash light to the brim,
A welcome seems smilin' from all.
The turf fire blazes with laughter and light,
The kettle pipes loud in its glee,
The song of the cricket is cheery at night,
When the wind brings a moan from the sea.

Two dear kindly hearts make the welcome complete,
The old man is bended and white ;
He fingers his beads on the old hawthorn seat,
While twilight is lost in the night.
The woman now links him with still lovin' pride,
He clings to her arm o'er the green,
And dreams of the day when he brought her a bride
To his lone mountain home in Dereen.

THE SYMBOL OF ONE

The shadowed glory of a wooden cross,
Upon Golgotha's sacred mountain crest,
The trickling red upon the trampled moss,
The soul-rent sigh and then eternal rest.

And ever victory that symbol brought,
For brighter shone the shield of Constantine,
When through the blue in silvered light was wrought,
The battle emblem of a King divine.

And ever on despite the deeds insane,
When generations fought throughout the past,
And wolfish souls in struggles madly vain,
The Cross remains unconquered to the last.

O Bleeding Christ, upon the grassy mound,
O Dying Love, upon the hilly crest,
O Sacred Brow, with thorns a wreath around,
Thy Bended Head upon Thy Bruised Breast;

To Thee, O Bloodstain'd Heart, we safely cling,
And plead our echoed prayer to Him above,
"Look down, O Bleeding God, our outraged King,
Give us, give us again, Thy peace and love."

PRIMROSES

Fresh with a kiss from the cloudlets they steal on the ferny way,
Hiding pale tints in the greenwood waiting for spring's festive lay;
Lured by fair smiles from the heavens they peep with shy hearts aglow,
Soon clusters of trembling primroses lurk in moss shades below.

Frail leaf-buds from bending branches breathe welcome and love so kind,
Sunbeams are dancing in glory playing in sport with the wind;
Wild joy in woods and hedges when soft yellow blossoms appear,
"Ho, ho!" pipe the forest voices, "love flowers at last are here."

TWILIGHT MEMORIES

Sometimes I hear it passing in the moorland breeze,
The music of dead voices from a cabin home,
Where silver dawning glinting on the beechen trees,
Shadowed on the thatch a leafy dome.

Barefoot we trip again through heather tufts at morn,
While bogland birds are calling shrill across the wild,
The curlew and the plover, the seagull's shrieking scorn,
I hear them now as when I was a child.

Below we scare the rabbits passing on our way,
When jumping over ditches or a fallen log,
Ah, wisha, but our hearts were young and light the day
We filled the creels with turf sods in the bog !

But they are gone ! Across the grass the moorland call
Is but a mystic echo in the sobbing wind,
It conjures shadow faces o'er the churchyard wall,
That linger not when eyes with tears are blind.

TWO WINDS

Winter wind rolling thy bleak mountain song,
Tossing great oaks with thy breathing so strong,
Lambkins in fright,
Hide from thy sight,
While red berries scatter themselves below,
And trembling birdies tweet soft in the snow.
Shrieking winds sigh in sedges and river,
Whistle through reeds where lily leaves quiver,
Soon thy good-bye
Flashed from the sky,

Will melt on the soft shaded light of spring,
While green earth awakes with a gladsome ring.
Violet wind coming with spring in your breath,
Breathing of kisses that lure away death,
Flowers in birth,
Laughter and mirth
Lurk in thy heart with its pearl wreath of dew,
Wind of the snowdrop, I'm waiting for you !

THE MAN FROM THE SOUTH

JUNE

A summer's morn with sunshine on the dew,
And wayside blossoms scenting ev'ry breeze,
While fluting minstrels hidden in the trees
Brought love and laughter to the heart of you.

Back from the convict's cell to Roisin Dhu,
Back to the waiting hearts, the old home nest,
Where Kerry smiles within the amber west,
In clover fields and wilding waves of blue.

SEPTEMBER

A graceful eve with autumn in its breath,
A song of grief upon the harvest wind,
O tell it not that one so brave and kind,
Lies cold and pale within the home of Death.

But through the shroud of sorrow's purple gloom,
Across the hillside to the foaming sea,
The martyr's name in free eternity
Is flashing from the flower-wreathed tomb.

A CLUSTER OF SNOWDROPS

A cluster of snowdrops just born in the dawn,
In spangles of silver white mist on the lawn,
Coaxed forth from green cradles to herald the spring,
To wave on the grasses, to dance and to sing.

A cluster of snowdrops awake at the noon,
Soft blended with light stolen under the moon,
Your drooping bells merrily ring on the wind
A message of joy to the hearts of mankind.

A cluster of snowdrops asleep 'neath the star,
With the croon of the breeze and the lights from afar,
Ah ! hushed is thy music in sacred white rest,
In nature's soft arms clinging close to her breast.

ON THE WING

I saw the wild geese flying from the west,
When dirgeful winds were stirring in the weeds,
And wailing chants beyond the misty crest
Were mingled with the sighing of the reeds ;

A symphony of sorrow and its tears,
A banshee's floating keen upon the gale,
A kindred thought of partings in the years,
A mother's sob from out a windswept vale.

God speed ye, birds, to fields of summer hue,
For darkness hovers on the hillside brake,
But come again when silver and the blue
Are mirrored in the lonely mountain lake.

GLENCAR

A filmy mist upon the seas,
A hush within the lake
Where springtide lovelights splash the trees
Around the hawthorn brake.
A cascade tumbles mountain spray,
In cedar scents and thyme,
The woodlarks singing gently sway
Upon a bough of time.

Ah, lonely seems the city grey
In summer's turquoise blue,
For thoughts will come throughout the day
With dreams, Glencar, of you.
Of cowslips dancing on the hill,
Of thrushes in the thorn,
Forget-me-nots so quaint and still
In dewdrops of the morn.

White daisies nodding as you pass
And buttercups, a birth
Of golden stars in wayside grass,
A roundelay of mirth.
The blackbird whistling a refrain
That echoes sweet to me,
The linnets singing in the lane
In primal ecstasy.

O joy is there and loveliness
Within the even tide
God sheds a sacred peacefulness
Around the country side.
I seem to hear the beating wings
That sweep across the vale
The benediction nature sings
In Sligo's scented dale.

O deelish vor! it's cold you are out there, avic machree,
The bog winds sigh above the grass where soon I'll lie with thee.
That night I saw the fairy lights come stealin' o'er the sod
I knew that one of us would soon be stealin' up to God.

But sure, agra, my time was spent while you were young and strong;
That grave it should be mine, asthore, my waitin's sore and long.
The droopin' berries bloom again, your lips were once as red,
And now they're fallin' down like tears above your dreary bed.

The flail is hangin' on the wall, no more you'll thresh the corn;
Last harvest time your heart was light with laughter night and morn;
Your dancin' eyes and sunny smiles are hidden in the clay;
O God of mine, forgive my tears, he's twelve months dead to-day!

The candle burns within the pane, the hasp is from the door,
And open wide if passin' by I'm waitin' on the floor.
The winds are moanin' cold and hard, the fog is ghostly white,
O holy Virgin, take my prayer and guide his feet to-night.

A hopeful vigil, tearful prayers are borne beyond the skies,
White ashes hide the fire's glow and sleep the weary eyes.
The latch is raised, the hallowed one is breathing on her brow,
His chill lips kiss the sleeping one, her face is smiling now.

WIND OF THE WEST

Sweet winging winds of the kindly west
And the hills of gorse around,
Where peewits call from their turfy nest
To their wild mates' vigil ground.
A wish again for that heather crest
And a bog wind stealing by
To the lonely groves where the thrushes rest
And the paling grasses sigh.

Fair is the breeze on a mountain pass,
Soft whirling the ash trees green,
Blowing along through the tufted grass
With a fragrant breath between.
Grand is the wind on a Connaught height,
But fairest of all and best
Is the song that steals in a mellow light
Through heather bogs in the west.

FOR ULSTER'S SAKE

Will you hearken not to a mother's cry ?
Are the tears and blood in vain ?
Must the white hairs groan and the young lads die
For the same old cause again ?

Four flower-strewn fields in a pearly foam,
My harp strings oft thrilled them through ;
But my croon song now is an eerie moan,
For my heart is pierced anew.

My one greening field for a stranger's smile,
And my own they dare betray.
They would crush my soul in this tearful isle
While they barter love away.

But I hear a voiee through the mourning land,
And it whispers, "Never yield ;
Though the strangers give with a stranger's hand,
We must hold that one green field."

TO A MOTHER

Snowdrifts woven in the winter shadows
Out upon the plain,
Sorrow's message traced in icy fingers
On a window pane.

Hidden in a holly tree, a robin
Sang the lonely day,
Of little angels coming in the snowflakes
Coaxing more away.

Soft they stole within the whirling whiteness
Calling little "May,"
Gently smiling in her sleep you saw her,
Saw her steal away.

Out of the shade
He came with starlight music, secret strains
Of wilding hearts that heard in summer rains
A cherub's song, while in its silver gleams
Child angels from the meadow blossoms made
A sweetness for the singer's sacred dreams

Into the night
Of silence and its vision of forgets,
The purple pathos of those young regrets
Made sorrow's ecstacy, the bitter sweet.
He sang a nightingale in paling light
The "wither'd dreams" of life beyond the street.

ITS BIRTH

In glades of glorious sylvan green
Where tinted sunbeams play between
In sportive love to place unseen
Their gentle greeting kiss,
Amid this bower of life and love,
And mellowed softness from above,
As breathing from a sleeping dove,
A rosebud rests in bliss.

In perfumes nursed by crooning May
The little cradles lulling sway,
Guarded by elf and woodland fay,
In shadow rocks between;
Its opening sweetness steals along,
The linnet sings its sweetest song,
A greeting from the forest throng
To beauty still unseen.

Beneath the nightly silvered light,
Nestled in leafy arbour bright,
Soothed by moonbeams chastely white
A blossom shyly grows :
At morn, clear glistening drops of dew,
And Phœbus' kiss steal forth its hue,
Soon butterflies enchanted view
The glory of a rose.

AUTUMN'S DEATH

A wailing in the brown wind, and a sobbing from the sea,
A sighing in the leafy fort and death in ev'ry tree,
A moaning in the tinted glen where empty nests of grey
Bring mem'ries on the green gold bough of summer's sunlit day.

A silence on the lonely road, a gloom upon the lake,
A quiet on the yellow fields and scarlet berried brake,
A robin's song is stealing soft from out a hazel tree,
Where children gather browning nuts with laughter light and free.

A glory on the hillside when the crimson eve is nigh,
The glory of the autumn when it lingers in good-bye,
A golden flash, a bronzing trail, and then the paling light
That glides into the brooding gloom where sleeps the raven night.

INNISMURRY

Afar on a crest of the ocean,
Where sunbeams soft linger and rest,
An isle in a haze of devotion
Lies hugged by the waves of the west,
White cabins look over the waters,
That murmur in low echoed plaints,
A hymn for the fair sons and daughters
Away in this Island of Saints.

Ben Bulben in blue regal glory,
Keeps watch with a tenderness fond,
Round the fire is told the old story
How Finn flung the isle from beyond,
How the fairies with feet deeshy dawny,
Trip over the soft curling foam,
To dance on the green grassy bawneen,
In front of each islander's home.

God bless you and keep you forever,
Fair island of rich gloried past,
May thoughts of your saints guiding ever
Enkindle thy faith to the last,
May Patrick look down ever keeping
Alive the sweet tongue of the Gael,
God's love to you waking and sleeping,
In sunshine, in calm, and in gale.

ONLY A MEMORY

Under a yew tree's guarding height,
Silvered with rays of fading light,
A silent spot of gentle green,
Rests there beside a crystal stream.

Sweet plaintive breezes croon that way,
Where glistening tears of woodland fay,
In flow'ry chalices so fair
Linger to kiss the morning air.

The breezes blow the starry dew
To bathe this spot beneath the yew,
For here lies youth in dreamless sleep,
A love we did our best to keep.

Only a love in earth's chill womb,
Only a heart cold in its tomb,
Only at rest 'neath flowers white,
Only forever lost to sight.

Hush! the moan of wind and flowers,
Sorrow's tears and twilight's showers,
Stealing heartsighs below the sod,
Bring me nearer to thee and God.

MIDNIGHT

Soft croons the wind in the branches,
That circle the fairy sidhe,
A fort of twenty tall rowans,
In berried canopy,
That thrills in the midnight shadows,
With magic minstrelsy.

A silver flame in the darkness
And tinklings of music rare,
When from the rath troop the fairies
Streaming their wilding hair,
Lights sparkle bright as a starsky,
Shining in frosty air.

Onward they ride in the stillness,
A silver path by the gorse,
Their queen with beauty entrancing,
Leads on her milk-white horse,
God save us from harm while passing
Down where the four roads cross.

LOVE'S SACRIFICE

Beyond the woods and up the heather heights
Where golden flowers greet the dawning sheen,
A wind is waked beneath a shadow'd light
And mystic sounds of harps within the green.

And soft and low where lonely willows sigh,
It steals across the bogmint of the west,
The little shamrocks kiss it passing by
They know the voice and feel the throbbing breast.

To north and south where darksome billows roll,
A magic whisper breaks its scented breath,
A spirit song that speeds from soul to soul
And sings of Love unconquer'd e'en in death.

They heed and hear, the fairest, bravest, best,
A blood-stained road to cross, O Mhuire is truagh,
The valley bells no longer wake their rest,
They sleep, O Eire, in the heart of you !

A SUMMER SHOWER

On the myrtle crops
Fall the sparkling drops
In a silver sunbeam's ray,
And the wild rose blush
In its filmy hush
Glows bright on a trailing spray.

Where the poppies gay
And the hare bells play
When a green wind steals along,
The shining rain
On the ferns remain
In a summer's laughing song.

JIMMY

He is always there when the train gets in
With his dirty face and a sunny grin,
Ten purple toes make a cold design
With paper leggings held on with twine.
A Sinn Féin badge in his tinted coat
That covers all to his windswept throat,
A healthful lad it is plain to see
For the elements make a melody
As they hide and seek through the threadless rag,
When he struts the quays with a Woodbine fag.
His blue eyes gleam with a mischief rare,
When he speaks of "home" with a well-worn pray'r,
How his mother died of St. Vitus Dance,
And his father now filled a grave in France.
Again with a sob would he tell the tale
How his father died for old Granuaile,

How he fought and fell as a volunteer,
By a sentry shot near the wooden pier.
Last week he came with a clumsy walk,
And seemed inclined for a long, long talk,
"At the Lodge to-day I am going to dine,
Have a decent smoke and a glass of wine,
Some swank, you see," and he made a bow,
"My sister's coat is my trousers now."
His legs in the sleeves of her motley gown
Skipped on to the tram for the busy town.

GLEANERS

In the corn field a colleen was reaping
Long drooping sheaves bursting with grain,
The ripe yellow barley was sweeping
In autumn wind over the lane.

I helped with the tying and binding,
And whispered my love in between,
But never the colleen seemed minding,
She smiled like the sun on the green.

For her eyes were as black as a berry
With a flashing yet shy coaxing dart,
Ah, coy are the colleens of Kerry
When breaking a poor gorsoon's heart.

In the cornfield again we were flinging
The ripe golden grain on the cart,
'Ere threshing time came I was bringing
Her home as the wife of my heart.

IN WAR TIME

My girleen ban, with eyes of sorrow
And fading heart of poisoned peace,
Poor heart, that lives but for the morrow,
Which brings thee not thy soul's release.

The roses, sweet, are gently dying,
Soft petals fall with tears of thine,
The pigeons, too, from home are flying,
For thee the stars have ceased to shine.

The rain-soaked heather bells are sighing
A dirgeful symphony of love,
If underneath his heart were lying,
And Irish breezes soft above!

But nightingales are near him singing,
Where moves the stately fleur-de-lis,
And o'er that grove sweet fragrance flinging,
Where sleeps a love of loves, machree.

Fiat! yet ever, nearer, ever,
In fields of light beyond the the skies,
Where human things can never sever,
The spirit hearts of Paradise!

THE HARVEST MOON

Soft in the darking night,
Over a purple crest,
An arc of seraph light
Wrought with gleams from the west,
Glides to the hillside dale
With silver beams between,
Sprays in the restful vale
Where wood-nymphs sleep unseen.

Tender a wheat wind's birth,
Smiling its waving love,
Joy of harvest and earth,
And mystic peace above.
Happy laughter by day,
Rest with the waning light
The cornstalks dance away
The merry fleeting night.

Queen of the harvest grace,
Shine on the hillside dale,
With round and kindly face
Through mountain's misty veil.
Speed Dian's silver bow,
With autumn's flashing shields,
To tinting woods below
And smiling fruiting fields !

CONNOR OF THE CURLS

Black eyes full of mischief,
Curls of chestnut brown,
Streaks of golden sunset
In a silky crown.

Petals of a red rose
Blushing in his cheek,
Dimples in his laughter
Playing hide and seek.

Up and down the kitchen,
Marching safe and sure,
Lisping songs of Erin—
Soldier miniature !

Weeshy feet soon tire,
On his mother's knee,
Hears a wonder story
Full of ecstasy.

Tales of brave Setanta,
Other heroes too,
What they did for Banba,
And for me and you.

Time will wake the spirit
Full of hope and joy,
Caitlin gently nurtures
In a brown-hair'd boy.

ON SHEE MOR

O gentle the hush on a hillside of Connacht,
With sunshine and shadow enwoven between,
The smiles of a God and His angels upon it,
Sweet musk of the cowslip incensing the green.

A dazzle of light is the little gorse cluster,
A lamp's golden flame on a Mass-rock of grey,
Its glow seemeth fraught with the soft mellow lustre
That hallows the story of Eire to-day.

O wind of the hillside what sweetness surpasses
Thy whispers at eve when the darkness is nigh.
The wild harp of Dagda awake in the grasses
The soft thrill of joy in a soul passing by.

O spirits of starlight forever be keeping
Thy vigil of love on this hillside of light,
As wild flowers under the moonlight are sleeping,
And dreaming of God in a wind of the night.

"RECREATION"

I love it for the dreams it brings of childhood's summer's day,
When life was sweet and all its tears upon the roses lay,
A ring of happy children linking hands when playtime came,
To make the magic circle as we sang the little game:

"Wallflowers, wallflowers,
Growing up so high,
We're all little children
And we must die."

How vex'd we were when through the links the lads raced out in glee,
Or started throwing crabs that fell beneath the fairy tree,
When pouting Peggy Rooney cried that Shamie was to blame,
He pulled the ribbons off our plaits, but still we played the game:

"Wallflowers, wallflowers
Growing up so high,
We're all little children,
And we must die."

At evening when we vainly sought to find a leprecaun,
We always made another ring on Shamie Kelly's bawn,
A shriek within the haggard brought a scramble left and right,
A race along the oatfield, singing out with all our might:

"Wallflowers, wallflowers,
Growing up so high,
We're all little children,
And we must die."

But time has changed the countryside and broken up the ring,
Now other little comrades form the circle as they sing
The happy rhyme of innocence, each linking hands apart,
Their voices steal an echo through the shadow on my heart :

Wallflowers, wallflowers,
Growing up so high,
Beneath is Shamie Kelly,
The first to die !

AT EVENTIDE

In the twilight the swallows come home
Where the star-lilac shelters the bee,
And the cuckoo sings bright in the eventide light
To a heart weary waiting for thee ;
And the grey-blue with tintings of gold
Mingles soft in the shadows above,
Oh ! when green nature sleeps and the dew faintly weeps
Steals my heart to thy heaven and love.

When the wind-sighs are hushed in the leaves
Silver starlights rest over the sea,
Filmy fairy feet throng to a wild woodland song,
Crooning breezes soft murmur of thee ;
Trailing shadows race down to the glen,
Hawthorn blossoms are sweet on the lea,
And my last prayer, asthore, as the darkness creeps o'er
Begs the angels to guard thee for me.

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